

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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-----128048 020951Z /17

R 020726Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL PALERMO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2463
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL TURIN
AMCONSUL TRIESTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: PCI MOVES TO CONSOLIDATE GAINS IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS

REF: ROME 5462

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. SURVEY OF CURRENT STATUS OF CITY GIUNTAS
IN SICILY'S NINE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL SUGGEST THAT:
- PCI IS PUSHING TO SEE THAT FULL DIMENSIONS OF ROLE
RECENTLY ACHIEVED FOR PARTY AT NATIONAL AND SICILIAN
REGIONAL LEVELS ARE MATCHED AND/OR EXPANDED UPON AT LOCAL
LEVEL;
- PCI MOVES CONTINUE TO BE SECONDED - SOMETIMES ANTICIPATED -
BY PSI;
- DC SEEMS LITTLE INCLINED LOCALLY TO RESIST FURTHER BLURRING
OF DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION;
- TO DEGREE ITS FOCUS EVER MOVES FROM THE MORO CASE, NON-
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COMMUNIST ELECTORATE SEEMS VIEW ROME AND PALERMO DEVELOPMENTS
IN DC-PCI RELATIONSHIP WITH UNEASY RESIGNATION;
- LATTER UNEASINESS NOT EXPECTED, HOWEVER, TO HELP FAR RIGHT
PARTIES IN MAY LOCAL ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE 1975 ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS GAVE THE DC SUFFICIENT
STRENGTH IN THE CITY COUNCILS OF SICILY'S NINE PROVINCIAL

CAPITALS TO FORM GIUNTAS WITHOUT ANY FORM OF "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH THE PCI. INDEED, IN EVERY PROVINCIAL CAPITAL BUT CALTANISSETTA, THE DC COULD FORM NUMERICAL MAJORITIES EVEN WITHOUT THE PSI (AND THE LIBERALS). AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, HOWEVER, EXPERIENCE IN SICILY HAS SEEN LOCAL DC OCCASIONALLY IN FRONT OF, AND NEVER FAR BEHIND, LEVEL AND FORMS OF DC-PCI ACCOMODATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL. ONGOING AND RECENTLY-CONCLUDED CRISES IN SICILY'S THREE MAJOR TOWNS SUGGEST THAT THIS IS TILL THE CASE AND THAT PCI IS MOVING SMARTLY TO TACK-DOWN ROME-TYPE ARRANGEMENTS WHERE THEY NOT YET INSTALLED AND INDEED TO GO BEYOND THEM WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

2. IN PALERMO, FOR EXAMPLE, MAYOR SCOMA HAS HEADED AN ALL-DC MINORITY GIUNTA SINCE JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS. BASED ON A DC "UNDERSTANDING" WITH THE PCI, PSI, PSDI, AND PRI, THE SCOMA GIUNTA WAS INSTALLED AS A THREE-MONTH STOP GAP MEASURE PENDING ADOPTION BY THE SAME PARTIES OF A FULL "PROGRAM ACCORD" COVERING POLICY AND PATRONAGE. NEGOTIATIONS IN THE LATTER DIRECTION HAVE FOR SOME TIME FEATURED PSI INSISTENCE THAT THE PCI BE INCLUDED IN THE CITY GIUNTA TO MAKE THE COMMUNISTS "FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS". THE PCI'S NEW PROVINCIAL FEDERATION CHIEF, LUIGI COLAJANNI, (PALERMO 372) HAS NOW JOINED THE PSI IN THIS CAMPAIGN; WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS DESCRIBING THEMSELVES AS INDIFFERENT ON THE QUESTION. INDEED THE PCI MIGHT EVEN BE PREPARED TO LOWER ITS SIGHTS, FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOW, IF ONLY THE PSI WOULD STOP WORKING SO HARD IN ITS BEHALF. TO ITS CREDIT, THE DC HAS TO DATE RESISTED A GIUNTA ROLE FOR THE PCI, THOUGH ALL OF THE FEATURES OF THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL FORMULA WILL DOUBTLESS BE INCLUDED IN ANY FUTURE COALITION ARRANGEMENT.

3. IN CATANIA, SALVATORE COCO (DC-IMPEGNO DEMOCRATICO) WAS ELECTED ON APRIL 11 WITH THE CITY COUNCIL SUPPORT OF THE DC, PCI, PSI, PSDI AND PRI; AND HIS FOUR-PARTY CENTER-LEFT GIUNTA ENJOYS FULL PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT FROM THE PCI. IN REFUSING TO VOTE ON INDIVIDUAL GIUNTA MEMBERS, HOWEVER, THE PCI WISHED TO STRESS THE "INADEQUACY OF A GIUNTA WITHOUT COMMUNISTS" THOUGH THE PARTY WILL HEAD A FEW CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND THE LEADERS OF THE FIVE PARTIES WILL MEET PERIODICALLY TO REVIEW GIUNTA PERFORMANCE.

4. IN MESSINA, THE YOUNG (31) DC INCUMBENT, ANTONIO ANDO; BEAT BACK REBELLION IN HIS OWN PARTY AND WAS RE-ELECTED MAYOR ON APRIL 11 AT THE HEAD OF A DC-PSI-PSDI GIUNTA WITH FULL EXTERNAL SUPPORT FROM THE PCI, PRI, AND PLI. THOUGH A FORMAL WATCHDOG COMMITTEE INCLUDING THE PCI HAS NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED TO PASS ON GIUNTA PERFORMANCE, INFORMAL MEETINGS BETWEEN PARTY

LEADERS ARE ANTICIPATED. IN ANY EVENT, THE PCI'S ROLE IN THE GIUNTA'S CITY COUNCIL MAJORITY HAS BEEN FORMALIZED TO A GREATER DEGREE THAN EVER IN THE PAST.

5. IN DISCUSSING ABOVE ARRANGEMENTS, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND OTHERS CONTINUE TO REFLECT CONCERN WITH ARRANGEMENTS THEMSELVES AND WITH EVIDENCE AT ALL LEVELS THAT PCI IS MOVING ADROITLY AND PROMPTLY TO EXPLOIT EVERY INCH OF ITS NEW ROLE AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS. HOWEVER, THOUGH MAY ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTION CAMPAIGN JUST NOW GETTING UNDER WAY, WE REMAIN DOUBTFUL THAT ABOVE CONCERNS WILL FAVOR PARTIES TO THE RIGHT OF THE DC AT ELECTION TIME. COLLINS

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